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CIA-RDP79T00975A030000010008-9

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Tuesday April 5, 1977

CG NIDC 77-078C

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

State Dept. review
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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Tuesday, April 5, 1977.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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SPAIN: Communists Legalization

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[] //The refusal by the administrative chamber of the Spanish Supreme Court to rule on the legality of the Communist Party is a clear setback to Prime Minister Suarez' liberalization program. The government must now choose between several unpalatable options and could face an outbreak of demonstrations and violence as Spain prepares for its important legislative election this summer. Leftists have already clashed twice with police in Madrid since the court decision was announced on Saturday.//

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[] //Key government leaders reportedly favor legalizing the Communist Party to strip it of its martyr's status and expose its electoral weakness--they do not expect the Communists to obtain more than 8 percent of the vote. By working through established Francoist institutions, the government had apparently succeeded in gaining the support of both the right and the military for legalizing the Communists.//

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[] The court's refusal to cooperate, however, has put the government back to square one on the difficult decision and narrowed its options. The government could:

--Send the case to the criminal chamber of the Supreme Court in the hope that it would prove more cooperative.

--Make the decision itself.

--Declare that it lacks authority to make the decision--or simply procrastinate--leaving the problem to the next government.

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[] The only option that would fully satisfy the opposition would be for the government to legalize the party outright. Doing so, however, would raise the possibility of unrest in conservative quarters of the military and security forces. While there has reportedly been some mellowing of military opposition to legalizing the Communists during the past few months--the military agreed to accept it if the court ruled in the party's favor--much bitterness remains among the Francoist veterans of the Spanish civil war.

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25X1 [REDACTED] The government is more likely to choose between the other options--both of which would alienate the opposition, since delays would be inevitable and the Communists' election campaign would be hobbled.

25X1 [REDACTED] The Communist Party has reacted to the court's decision with controlled anger, warning that the move could endanger the election and calling for opposition support in putting pressure on the government to legalize the party. The party is aware that overplaying its hand now could lead to violent clashes that would risk destroying the good will the party has won during the past year. The Communists are more likely to behave with restraint, while working behind the scenes to apply pressure and build support for their cause.

25X1 [REDACTED] Under the provisions of the electoral law, Communists can run as "independents," and the party has, in the past, indicated that it will do so if necessary. The Communists have apparently been bitterly disappointed by the court's action, however, and they could try to force the issue by campaigning in their own name.

25X1 [REDACTED] As the government considers its options, it must also take into account the threat posed by the far right. Rightwing terrorists have demonstrated their willingness to use bloodshed to derail the liberalization program, and clashes between the opposition and the police would provide a perfect setting for further attacks.

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LEBANON: Situation Report

[] Press reports that the Syrians provided heavy artillery and rocket support yesterday to Palestinian and Lebanese leftist forces in southern Lebanon have not been confirmed by other sources. If the reports are true, it would be the first direct involvement by Syria in the fighting in the south.

[] Lebanese leftists and Palestinians yesterday recaptured the village of Tayyibah, which fell to the Christians last week. As of yesterday, both sides were reportedly engaged in a fierce house-to-house battle in Marj Uyun, which was captured by the Christians last December.

[] In a statement last week clearly directed at the Christian rightists, Damascus warned in the ruling Baath Party's newspaper that "nobody will be allowed, under any pretext, to threaten the peace in Lebanon." The Syrians, who have strongly supported President Sarkis, regard the continued fighting in the south as a threat to his efforts to bring stability to the country.

[] Senior Syrian military representatives reportedly visited southern Lebanon on April 2. In the past, such visits have preceded Syrian military moves. []

PAKISTAN: Demonstrations

25X1 [] The opposition in Pakistan is continuing demonstrations aimed at bringing down Prime Minister Bhutto and seems determined to persist until he steps down. So far, however, it has not created the widespread disorders that it hopes will cause the military to remove him.

25X1 [] Bhutto has made no progress in his efforts to reach a compromise or to divide his opponents. Over the past three weeks, more than 100 people have been killed in the disorders and between 6,000--the government's figure--and 24,000--the opposition's figure--have been arrested.

25X1 [] The protesters are shifting their main effort to the Punjab, Pakistan's most populous and important province. Although the opposition probably has greater resources in other parts of the country, it has little chance of forcing Bhutto from office unless it can create serious trouble in the Punjab. Lahore, the provincial capital, is the current focus of activity. The next major effort there will be demonstrations tomorrow to protest the convening of the provincial assembly.

25X1 [] The opposition is making more use of demonstrations by organizations of lawyers, religious leaders, and women. It hopes the public will associate these protest activities with similar tactics that led to the fall of President Ayub Khan in 1969. Police efforts to break up demonstrations by such groups--especially by women--could well turn more of the populace against the government.

25X1 [] Bhutto continues to emphasize that he wants to compromise, although it is also clear that he will use force if necessary to stay in office. He has reportedly offered to give the opposition as many as 40 more seats in the National Assembly. Pakistani election authorities have begun examining the results of the election last month and have already overturned the election of one of Bhutto's former cabinet ministers, but the commission is widely distrusted. []

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Mlynar to Emigrate?

25X1 [] Zdenek Mlynar, a prominent member of the Czechoslovak dissident group known as Charter 77, is reportedly considering emigrating to Austria because he believes the movement has run its course.

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[] US diplomats in Prague recently learned that Mlynar-- who is under virtual house arrest--sent his wife to the Austrian embassy early last week with a personal message for Chancellor Kreisky. Mlynar allegedly asked for a position in the Austrian Academy of Sciences and said he wants to take with him six to eight other intellectuals who are members of the dissident group. Mlynar and his friends reportedly plan to establish a group that will study "Eurocommunism," possibly in Austria or in Italy.

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[] Mlynar reportedly believes there will be only a short period during which the dissidents will be allowed to leave Czechoslovakia, and he expects some arrests and further repression.

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[] If this report is true, Mlynar has had an abrupt change of heart about emigrating. In late January, he and several other prominent dissidents refused a government offer to let them leave the country. The regime, which in recent weeks has maintained strong pressure against the Charter 77 members, will certainly view any departures as a welcome setback to the dissident movement.

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[] The US embassy believes the Charter 77 activists are deeply concerned over their inability--despite widespread foreign support--to rally substantial domestic support for their cause or to force greater respect by the regime for human rights. Mlynar's emigration would be a major psychological blow to the dissidents, who reportedly were uncertain about their future following the unexpected death last month of one of their spokesmen, Jan Patocka.

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[] The embassy reports that sources in Prague expect some of the dissidents nevertheless to try to dramatize their cause on the eve of the Belgrade preparatory meeting on European security issues in June. []

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USSR-MOZAMBIQUE: Treaty

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[] The Soviet-Mozambican friendship treaty, which was published Sunday, closely parallels the treaty Moscow concluded with Angola last fall.

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[] The treaty contains what have become standard clauses calling for closer economic, cultural, scientific, political, and military cooperation. It also contains the usual pledges to consult and concert policy in the event either side perceives a threat to peace. The latter provisions have been interpreted in many cases as having the overtones of a mutual defense treaty. The USSR has been careful, however, not to commit itself in such treaties to anything more than consultation in the event of war.

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[] The treaty also contains a specific Soviet pledge of support for Mozambique's policy of nonalignment, as well as a Mozambican endorsement of the USSR's detente policies and some of its pet disarmament proposals.

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[] The Soviet commitment to provide continued military aid to Mozambique was not spelled out as extensively as in the USSR's treaties with Egypt, Somalia, and Iraq. The commitment to continued defense cooperation in the interests of both sides probably will revive speculation that the Soviet navy is to be granted special port privileges in Mozambique.

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[] During President Podgorny's recent trip, however, both sides went out of their way to dampen speculation about Soviet bases in Mozambique. We believe that the Mozambicans, at least in present circumstances, probably remain reluctant to grant the USSR naval privileges.

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[] Like all Soviet treaties except those with Egypt and Iraq, the treaty with Mozambique is to be of 20 years duration and can be automatically renewed for five-year periods if neither side objects. []

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CENTRAL AMERICA: Coffee Rust Disease

[] Coffee rust disease, first reported in a small area of Nicaragua in December, has now spread to Costa Rica and Honduras. It will probably continue to spread rapidly throughout Central America and into Mexico, threatening--at least for several years--to decrease world supplies of coffee even further. The onset of the rainy season in April and May will greatly increase the potential for the disease to spread.

[] Nicaragua made the problem worse by failing to do all that was necessary when the disease was first discovered. The disease now infests such a broad area that it is doubtful the country can eradicate it. The Nicaraguans probably can cope with the disease, but it will be expensive because coffee growers will require improved technology and modernization of production techniques. The government has already destroyed 600,000 trees, spent some \$500,000 to combat the disease, and allocated an additional \$2.8 million for fungicides and equipment.

[] As a result of Nicaragua's experience, other Central American governments are working out the policies they will use to attack the disease. They have already set up a joint \$20-million fund to fight the disease.

[] The coffee rust fungus is one of the eight worst agricultural diseases. The most effective control measures for immediate use are strict quarantines, chemical fungicides, and

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destruction of badly infected trees. In the longer term, susceptible varieties of the coffee plant can be replaced with rust-resistant varieties. Brazil successfully used these methods to contain the disease after it appeared there in 1970.

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FIJI: Election

[] An election upset in Fiji last weekend forced the moderate and multiracial Alliance Party out of office and created a political stalemate that could heighten racial tensions. About 42 percent of the people are of Fijian ancestry; 50 percent are descendants of East Indians.

[] Prime Minister Ratu Mara resigned yesterday after the parliamentary election gave his party only 24 seats in the 52-seat lower house. Ratu Mara has rejected a bid from the National Federation Party to form a coalition government. The Federation, a predominantly Indian party, won 26 seats, insufficient to form a government without the support--which is unlikely--of one or both of the winners of the two remaining seats.

[] During the campaign the Alliance seemed to be in a strong position against the faction-ridden Federation. Although the Alliance is led by Fijians, its espousal of racial harmony had previously won it the support of about a quarter of the Indian voters.

[] The Alliance's prospects were undercut by the new--and blatantly racist--Fijian Nationalist Party. This party won only one seat but apparently drained enough votes from the Alliance in several constituencies to enable Indian candidates to win.

[] Both Fijian and Indian political leaders recognize that the naming of an Indian prime minister would increase tensions. Despite his initial rejection of a coalition, Ratu Mara may calculate that the continuing disarray in the Indian party will induce it to agree to a coalition in which Fijians would be dominant.

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